DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 089 359 CS 201 089

AUTHOR McCarthy, Dorothea, Ed.; And Others
TITLE Factors That Influence Language Growth.
INSTITUTION National Conference on Research in English.; National Council of Teachers of English, Champaign, Ill.
PUB DATE 53
NOTE 34p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Bilingualism; *Child Language; *Environmental Influences; Family Environment; *Language Development; *Language Enrichment; Language Handicaps; Language Research; Remedial Instruction; School Environment

ABSTRACT

This booklet contains four articles that discuss factors influencing language growth. The first, "The Child's Equipment for Language Growth" by Charlotte Wells, examines what the child needs for language learning, how the child uses his equipment for language growth, and what school factors facilitate the child's use of his equipment for language growth. The second article, "Home Influences" by Dorothea McCarthy, examines individual differences in language at school entrance, babbling in infancy, mother-child relationships and speech problems, home atmosphere, bilingualism, interdependence of home and school atmospheres, language disabilities, and remedial work. The third article, "School Influences" by Ruth G. Strickland, examines the teacher, the peer group, the school environment and atmosphere, and the interrelationships among the language arts. The last article, "Community Influences" by Muriel Crosby, examines the community as a school laboratory for language growth, modern media of communication, and the influences of church, library, and summer camp on children's language growth. (HOD)

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FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE LANGUAGE GROWTH

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Prepared by a Committee
of the
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A Research Bulletin of the
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RESEARCH IN ENGLISH

ED 089 359

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The Child's Equipment for Language Growth

CHARLOTTE WELLS[1]

The child's ability to respond to his environment and to make use of his opportunities for learning depends, to a considerable extent, on the basic equipment he has for the task of acquiring language. Children must be able to see, hear, feel, move, understand, make associations, coordinate their activities, and adjust to the people and things around them if they are to grow at a normal rate in language ability.

We shall be concerned here with specific considerations of some of the factors within the child himself that enable him to acquire, retain, and improve language skills. Although this discussion of the child's equipment for language growth, of necessity, treats "the child" as a composite, and considers the essential stages that cannot be skipped if a child is to follow the development trends leading to language that is "within normal limits" (8, 19), the variability of individuals from the norm can never be overlooked.

Only brief mention will be made, in this section, of environmental factors that contribute to language growth, for the influences of the home, school, and community will be discussed in detail in subsequent articles in this series.

What Does the Child Need for Language Learning?

The child's contact with the world is through his developing senses and his intellect. Slowly, and sometimes painfully, he builds associations between what he sees and feels and hears and the meaning of those things. If he is to notice and respond, he needs to use language, as others do. His emerging linguistic abilities will help him to deal with the world around him and will provide him with tools for other learning activities.

From the undifferentiated responses of the newborn infant, the complex adjustments and coordinations of language develop. Some of the factors needed for this emergence of a learned process from random activity are the physical, such as health, nutrition, glandular secretions that determine growth, muscular coordinations that can be trained, sensory and motor equipment that makes for reception of and response to stimuli; the psychological, such as intelligence and personal adjustment; and the environmental, such as the home and school situations and the influence of family, teachers, and playmates. (14) If all of these factors function to encourage, not to impede, development, the child will learn to understand and to use language. Stated more briefly, "Every child will learn to talk unless some important factor prevents speech acquisition" (20, p. 101).

But we should remember that language is learned. A child is not born with the ability to understand what he hears, to say what he thinks, to read from a set of printed symbols, or to put down his ideas in written form. He learns to associate word with object, symbol with thing represented. Joe comes to realize, for example, that the combination of sounds so often directed at him means himself—his name—and that a slightly different combination of noises—"No!"—means that he must stop doing whatever he is doing. Ann learns to associate her mother's warning word with the hot stove and may even call a stove "a hot" for a while. Children learn to connect, with the objects they see, the sound combinations that reach their brains by way of their ears. They learn to combine and co-ordinate the movements of lips, tongue, jaw, larynx, and breathing mechanism to produce by imitation, the sound combinations that will get results from

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those around them. The emergence of language skills from the confusion of early infancy is indeed a complex and remarkable occurrence.

What equipment does the child need, then, if he is to acquire the complex skills that are language? Certainly the general factors cited above—the physical, the psychological, and the environmental—are important. However, those most directly related to the development of linguistic skill are intelligence, sense of hearing, physical structure, and muscular coordination. And, although a child has, at birth, certain of these prerequisites for producing and perceiving language, he needs to learn to employ them in his expanding relationships to his environment.

One important element in the combination of circumstances that makes language growth possible is the emotional atmosphere in which the child develops. As he enjoys emotional well being, as he is free from anxiety and tension, as he senses that he is loved and protected, he has an opportunity to grow in language with minimal distractions or disturbances. The importance of this environmental atmosphere makes inclusion of it essential here, but the matter of family influences will be the chief topic of the second in this series of discussions on language growth.

Within this environmental framework, the child must have, first of all, the power to make associations, to build neural pathways, to receive impressions and to respond with activity. He must have sufficient intellectual capacity to be able to learn language habits and retain them. He does not learn all these associations immediately, but begins to acquire them during infancy and continues this intellectual process throughout his life. The relationship between intelligence and the development of linguistic ability has frequently been pointed out and emphasized by research (8, 15, 20, 22, 23).

Likewise of importance to the learning of language is the ability to hear. The baby does not begin to distinguish sounds until he is about two months old, although he may respond indiscriminately to noises and even to voices before that time (3, 7, 8). However, unless he can receive and comprehend the auditory stimuli that bombard him, he will not respond with the vocalization and articulatory movements that will develop into oral language. The deaf baby will gurgle and cry, for deafness does not inevitably mean muteness, but he will not continue to use vocal sounds in response to others and to himself unless he receives special training (7, 20, 21).

The actual movements of phonation and of articulation need to be mastered if the child is to learn to use language. "Many neuro-motor differentiations must be achieved before (the child) reaches the threshold of that highly socialized form of communication known as speech." (7) p. 42 and 272. But motor development is not, in speech learning, a random sort of growth. (15) The child's babbling paves the way for the later, more conventional sound combinations that are words. He needs, therefore, an intact speech mechanism that is capable of functioning in the process of learning language.

He needs a respiratory mechanism that operates efficiently enough to keep him alive and that can, at the same time, be used to provide an air stream for the production of vocal tone. This stream of air, set into motion in the larynx to produce voice or passing unimpeded between the vocal bands, is molded into speech sounds by the lips, teeth, tongue, and palate.

The child needs an efficient mechanism for producing these speech sounds. This part of his equipment he has used for some kind of communication from the time he was born (1). Now, as he begins to make use of it for language, he modifies the crying and gurgling and cooing to form

words. He will use vocal tone for some sounds and not for others. He will make his vocal cords vibrate for all the sounds in "mama" and "bye-bye," but he will stop their vibrations for a fraction of a second in the middle of "cookie" or at the end of "cup." These complicated and rapid adjustments are learned by unconscious imitation if the intellect and the ear provide the tools for learning, and if the environment is conducive to the acquisition of speech.

In achieving words, the child needs equipment that will enable him to form the sounds of which the words are made. In addition to knowing words and their meanings, he needs to have, and to be able to use, tongue, lips, palate, throat passages, nasal cavities, and, eventually, teeth. The structures of the throat and mouth have been employed for the fundamental functions of nursing, swallowing, crying, and breathing, and must now be used for speech as well.

The chief learning problem here is the modification of the action, if the structures are intact and can function effectively, so that the lips, which have closed around the nipple in nursing, can now close and open for the "b" sound and other sounds. The proficiency developed in moving the tongue to push soft foods to the back of the mouth is now needed for tongue movements that can change rapidly from one to another. The closure of the passage between the mouth and the nasal cavities, used to prevent liquids from entering the nose, now must be alternately retained and abandoned in the transition from non-nasal to nasal sounds. In all this learning process, the child needs speed, accuracy, steadiness, and strength of voluntary movement (15). Furthermore, the child learning to speak develops awareness of what is happening to the structures he is using, for his kinesthetic sense helps him to control the various parts of the speech mechanism by letting him know where those parts are and what they are doing.

Throughout all these processes, the child co-ordinates his activities. His reception of auditory cues, his comprehension of meaning from those cues, his understanding and use of gestures and facial expressions, his selection of a word or words for response, his actual production of the word in spoken form—all these come in sequence or even simultaneously, in a short space of time, and with accuracy, while the child sits or stands or moves about, while he continues to be a living, acting, and reacting organism.

His coordination of activities is influenced, in part at least, by his general emotional and physical state. If he is well and happy, he will be more likely to respond adequately to stimuli for speech. If he is tired, cross, hungry, thwarted, or otherwise disturbed, his oral responses may regress to babyish random activity. Many factors and influences combine to affect language growth.

All of the child's equipment should be "within normal limits" if it is to function at or near normal levels. Some children, however, whose structures for speech seem defective, still make sufficient compensation, in one way or another, to learn and to use oral language that cannot be differentiated from that of the so-called "normal" child. Many children, in spite of slightly subnormal intellectual ability, structure, or coordination, develop language skills that serve their needs adequately. And many with quite normal equipment for hearing and speaking fail to reach even average levels in these functions. Individual variations, rather than similarities, characterize children in the process of learning language skills, but the many who achieve expected levels show us that the learning process, irregular though it may be, reaches a point of adequacy in most learners.

How Does the Child Use His Equipment for Language Growth?

Although skills in reading and writing are learned later, the child uses his equipment for language growth in the acquisition of skills in listening and speaking from the time he is a few weeks old. Unless he is physically handicapped by an inability to move or control the structures used in speaking, unless he has a congenital lack of some of these structures, or unless he is deaf or hard of hearing, he will probably have no physical barrier to the learning of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Mental retardation, illness, or emotional disturbances may interfere with his learning, but the "average child" will probably be able to make adequate use of his physical, mental, and emotional equipment in the process of acquiring language.

The sequence of development cannot be categorically stated, but knowledge of certain trends may help the teacher in the elementary school to understand the level to which a child has developed and may assist her in planning language work for him—work that he is mentally, physically, and emotionally ready to undertake.

From the birth-cry to connected, intelligent speech and reading is a long step, taken in a comparatively short time. The baby, learning first to understand through listening and then to speak through imitation, grows up rapidly to become the third-grader who can read silently or aloud and can write down his ideas. The third-grader soon becomes the high school sophomore and then the university student or housewife or business man who takes the use of language skills for granted because they are so much a part of everyday life. Throughout this entire developmental process, the individual uses the equipment with which he was born and which develops as he grows and matures.

At first, the baby pays little attention to anything around him. Then, within his first two months, he begins to make some use of vision and hearing (3, 7). Forms gain meaning and, as he grows a little older, he recognizes familiar persons and things—his mother, his toys, even himself (7, 20). He seems to notice his surroundings and he begins to make intelligible, measureable responses to visual and auditory stimuli during the latter half of his first year. (7, 8, 15.)

During this first half-year, the child makes many noises and may produce, without meaning, the sounds of his native language and those of many other tongues as well (1). He will use about seven different sounds during his first two months (11). He will probably produce vowel sounds before consonants and will use such vowel sounds as the "e" in "met" and the "i" in "him" and the "u" in "cup" before he uses others. By the time he is two and a half, he will use vowel sounds efficiently, his production of vowels being at least 90 per cent accurate by this age (10, 16). His first consonant sounds may be those produced at the back of the mouth (9), but he will use in words first those consonants that are made with the lips and the front of the tongue. As he becomes more facile in control of his musculature, he will learn the more difficult consonant sounds (18).

As his awareness increases and as he becomes more able to control his speech mechanism, the child begins to use true language. His "first word"—a reasonable facsimile of a real word, used purposefully—is usually heard when he is between twelve and eighteen months of age (1), although the range has been estimated as from nine to twenty-four months (15, 20). He now imitates what he hears, not at random, but with some socialization and for the purpose of getting something he wants, obtaining attention, or controlling his environment and responding to it.

For some children, the process of lan-

guage development seems to falter as they begin to combine words and express ideas, repetitions and hesitations being noted in their speech. A child may even be termed a "stutterer" and suffer from the implications of that label. Actually, repetition is part of the speech pattern of all children and no relationship between language maturity and repetition has been established. (4) Many conditions tend to increase the repetitions and hesitations in a child's speech, for "after all, it takes a child a few years to acquire the experience, the words and the language skills necessary for the smooth handling of ordinary conversation" (12 p. 445).

After a child is about two and a half years old, his learning of language is rapid. Vocabulary increases from two or three words at one year to almost nine hundred words at the age of three and to almost two thousand words at the age of six (1, 3, 13). Nouns and verbs, used first, are joined by adjectives, adverbs, and other parts of speech (13) as the child's need for communication increases and as his store of experiences grows.

His listening ability, too, improves, so that he can follow directions and comprehend the meaning of many more words than he speaks. Neurological maturation brings increased auditory discrimination, so the child can tell one sound from another with greater accuracy, can distinguish between words more easily, and can identify his own errors. This increase in discriminative listening makes him more attentive to the speech of others and this, in turn, facilitates his self-expression and adds to his vocabulary.

During this same development period, from two to five, the child acquires additional skills in eye movement, focusing, and attention that will enable him to learn to read in due time. His physical activities, at first seemingly random and meaningless, now take on some purpose and he stacks blocks, scribbles with crayons, takes things apart, handles objects more efficiently, and is getting ready to learn the muscular skills of writing.

His articulatory ability grows as he learns more words, listens to others, sees the movements made by the lips and tongues of other speakers, and as his neuromuscular co-ordination increases. After his initial learning through experimentation, he acquires skill in producing and using speech sounds that are easily seen, easily heard, and easily formed; later, he learns those that are less visible, less audible, and more complex in articulatory movement (1, 18, 20, 21, 22).

Although the child's most advanced stage in language learning begins about three, it continues to mental maturity and beyond (15). By the time he is ready to enter school, he is using speech as a facile tool (16) and can listen with some attention and understanding to material that is within the range of his experience and his attention span. He is ready, in terms of language growth, if he is an "average child," to make the step from home to school, from one environment to another, from a familiar situation to a new one. He is almost ready to begin to add, to the language skills of listening and speaking, those of reading and writing.

What School Factors Facilitate the Child's Use of His Equipment for Language Growth?

If the child has the usual equipment for learning and using language in its various forms, and if he has made use of this equipment in something like a normal manner, he comes to the elementary school able to do many things. He can now listen, although his attention span may be short. He can speak, although he may need to develop a larger vocabulary, refine his sentence structure, and improve his articulation. He has ideas to express, even

though his experiences may be limited. He has made purposeful use of language for two or three years (15).

The influence of the family and the home is now supplemented by the influences of teacher, classmates, the school situation, and the community. Detailed considerations of these various factors will be made in other articles in this series, but certain factors in the classroom situation will be considered here as they affect the use the child in school may make of his equipment for language growth.

Chief among these school factors are provision for the child's physical comfort, growth, and maturation; observation of his adequacy in vision and hearing; allowance for the development of his neuro-motor abilities for language skills; encouragement in the use of his mental capacities for continued language learning; and consideration of his ability to meet the new situation.

Free as the classroom atmosphere may be, the beginner finds physical restrictions that he has not met before. Just to remain in one place for even a short period of time may be a new experience. He may need to get rid of excess energy through oral self-expression if he cannot, for the moment, eliminate it by running and jumping. If he finds in language an outlet for his ideas and feelings and energies, he will settle down and enjoy the mental and linguistic activities of the classroom.

His use of language may be an index to his general physical condition. As he is well or ill, his speech may vary and often his verbal responses—what he says and how he says it—may serve to indicate his state of health (6, 17).

Boys and girls in the elementary school are constantly changing physically and mentally. As they grow taller and broader, as they see new things, as they form new concepts and build new associations, they need more and more opportunity for self-expression—for communicating with and receiving communication from their environment. Better language skills may enable children to relate themselves more adequately to their expanding and demanding environment: wider experiences give them more to talk and write about and more understanding of what they hear and read.

As the child becomes older, he can perform more complex acts, his motor skills showing rapid improvement particularly when he is between nine and thirteen years of age (15). His voice will change with physical maturity. He learns to articulate more effectively and to use his muscles more capably for writing. He has more efficient coordination of eye movement in reading, more discriminative ability in listening. Physical growth and maturation can be assisted, if not assured, if the teacher provides for them as they appear and encourages their development through suitable classroom activities.

Vision and hearing serve the child in the learning process. Thus, the teacher has a responsibility for observing the adequacy of these special senses. She should be aware of indications of visual and hearing problems, for often the child's retardation in language growth may be attributable to defective vision or, more probably, to defective hearing.

If he cannot see well, the child may be retarded in reading, fail to follow written directions, be clumsy in his movements, lack orientation, and react to his visual handicap by unusual forms of behavior.

If he cannot hear adequately, he may be inattentive, ask for repetition of directions or questions, cup his hand to his ear, or turn his head to take advantage of better hearing in one ear. His speech may be deviant, he may copy dictated materials that he cannot hear, he may be reluctant to participate in activities that require oral communication. The hard of hearing child,

too, may behave in a typical ways—day dreaming, becoming a truant, or attempting to compensate for his social inadequacy by lying or stealing (2, 5). His suspicious alertness or tantrums or obstinacies may also be signs for the classroom teacher to note as indicative of a hearing handicap (7).

The school can assist the child who is handicapped in vision or hearing, first by finding him and then by providing the kind of special education he needs. A child can make maximum use of his special senses if he is provided with the stimuli to which he is ready to respond, if his physical surroundings give him the best opportunity for use of his special senses, and if he is encouraged to extend the quality and quantity of his visual and auditory observations as he matures.

With its constant regard for "readiness," the school can facilitate the language growth of the child by enabling him to use his developing neuro-motor abilities to his best level of achievement. If the child cannot write because he is not ready to undertake the manual activities of puting words on paper, the teacher can serve as his scribe. He can thus record his ideas, his vivid imaginings, his thoughts—in short, his communication—even though he cannot yet coordinate his muscular system for writing. He can be encouraged to express himself in other ways, by drawing, painting, modeling, and, of course, by talking. If the first-grader is ready to follow words across the page with his eyes, he may use and develop this skill in reading. If he can only look at pictures, he may need to grow into reading at his own rate. If he comes to second grade at seven with incomplete articulatory skills, he may need more time to develop the ability to form and use the complex "s," "z," "l," and "r" sounds that are usually the last to be learned because they are the most difficult to hear, see, produce, and combine (20).

Throughout all his learning experiences, the child whose intellectual potential is greater has a better chance to develop language skills than does the child who is less capable mentally. Conversely, mastery of language may often serve as a reliable index to intellectual powers (21). Recognition of relationships between comprehension and expression, between thought and language, is another of the factors that enable the teacher to help the child to use his equipment for language growth.

The security and freedom from tension that characterize a desirable learning situation continue to be important. As he builds new relationships with adults and other children, the child needs language for communication to gain favorable responses from those around him and he needs an environment that facilitates his use of his constantly growing language skills.

Even at an early age, the child has certain abilities in language—chiefly in listening and speaking. He lives in a predominately oral world for five or six years, but, as he grows older, he acquires more and more facility in using the equipment he has for all of the language skills. Throughout all his years, even as an adult, he will depend on his intellectual abilities, his association skills, his muscular coordination, his vision, his hearing, his kinesthetic sense, his physical structure, and his environmental experiences as means of facilitating his use of language.

Through listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as a child or as a maturing or mature person, the human being makes constant use of his equipment and language as a means of getting along with others and as a connecting link between himself and the society in which he lives.

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Home Influences

DOROTHEA MCCARTHY[1]

Individual Differences in Language at School Entrance

Children who enter school at five or six years of age differ tremendously in their facility with oral language. Some are little chatter-boxes who talk most of their waking hours, use extensive vocabularies and all varieties of sentence forms, and who delight in plying adults with a seemingly unending barrage of questions. Others are quiet, silent children who speak only when spoken to, and often reply only with a nod or a shake of the head. Initiative and spontaneity in speech are simply not a part of their personalities. Still others use language fairly spontaneously, but speak

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it poorly, with serious misarticulations, poor voice quality or marked hesitations.

Teachers are confronted with the problem of helping all these children with their varying degrees of linguistic equipment to communicate, to grow in language and to acquire skill in reading and writing which are essential for academic progress. They must appraise each child's stage of language development, and try to help each one to progress. First the children learn to listen, for all who are not deaf have some rudimentary skills in listening. They listen to the teacher's voice, to the directions she gives slowly and distinctly until their ears become attuned to her voice and speech mannerisms, which differ from the voices to which each has become accustomed at home. They listen too, to the various voices of their classmates, which also present problems in intelligibility and communication. Some can listen for as long as five or ten minutes to a story, whereas others are flighty and distractible and can listen for only a minute or less. There are also marked differences in comprehensions, for many may hear, but may not understand.

The children also actively produce oral speech as they address the teacher and other children, as they ask permission, plan their play, show a toy, or tell of the weekend trip with the family. For some children these are happy and successful experiences, but for others they result only in frustration and embarrassment. If John still speaks "baby-talk," his classmates may laugh; if Tony slips in a foreign word, which is accepted at home, he is misunderstood. The social situation of the group may make Arnold so tense that he repeats sounds and syllables and cannot continue.

The well-trained teacher knows that these are important experiences for each child, and that they may be extremely important in determining the degree of success each will have in his growth in the language arts. Faced with such a wide range of abilities in language the teacher naturally asks, what influences have been operating before these children came to school to bring about such marked differences in such a basic skill which is so essential to school success?

The home has been the arena of the child's first language lessons, and the varying degrees of language skill in the pupils are to a considerable extent the products of the kinds of experiences the children have had in their homes during their preschool years. The more the teacher can learn about the home environments of her students the better insights she will have into their potentialities and limitations for language growth.

Babbling in Infancy

Much recent research has dealt with the pre-linguistic sounds made by babies (20, 31). We are just beginning to appreciate the importance of these early utterances and are learning how to analyze them. It has been found for example that the more the nursing service is increased in a hospital maternity ward the less crying the babies do (1). It has also been shown that babies who are brought up in a normal family group situation vocalize more, and in a more advanced manner, than babies raised in an institutional environment (5, 15, 16, 17, 28). These tendencies are already evident in the first six months of life and before the child uses any true language with meaning. Even the differences often noted in verbal intelligence test results at higher ages and in other measures of language development between children from homes of upper and lower socio-economic status begin to manifest themselves in the cradle (5, 21).

Other studies have followed to higher ages those unfortunate children who have been separated from their families and who spend much of their babyhood in a hospital or foundling home (13, 15, 16,

17, 28). The evidence shows that the lack of individual attention and mothering that the child raised in an institutional environment experiences results in a general severe retardation in motor, language, adaptive and social behavior and that the most serious and most permanent retardation occurs in the language area. These results come not only from American studies, but also from England and from France (13, 28). The French study has shown that special individualized attention and providing some individual "mothering" within the institution seems to improve the rate of development, but that the language development seems least likely to recover under an improved regime. All of this evidence then points up the importance of a normal family environment for the baby's linguistic progress even in early infancy.

Mother-Child Relationships and Speech Problems

Another group of studies seems to indicate that the amount of contact the child has with the mother who is his first language teacher seems to be related to the rate at which he progresses in language growth. It is to the mother's smile and to her voice that the child gives his first responses and echoing vocalizations (30). It is the mother who interprets the culture to the child through the medium of language, and it is she who first impresses upon the child the socializing experiences of abiding by the rules of formal communication. The more opportunity the child has to hear a friendly voice and to have a correct model to imitate, the more rapid is his language growth. The only child, who has the undivided attention of the mother, and who enjoys it over a longer period of time than other children, is by far the most precocious child in learning to speak and use the language (8). Twins, however, as well as triplets, and the famed Dionne quintuplets are usually retarded in language development (4, 8, 9). These are all children who have had to share the mother, and who have never had her completely to themselves during this all-important formative period. Girls who usually spend more time with their mothers are usually more advanced in language than boys (21).

It appears that not only is the amount of time spent with the mother in the early years important for language development, but that the kind of relationship that exists between mother and child is also of tremendous significance in facilitating or hindering his language growth. If a child is babied and pampered, one of the significant symptoms of the immaturity of his personality may be a marked lisp, difficulty in pronouncing "r" and "l" sounds or some other form of babyish speech in which he tenaciously clings to former speech patterns and manifests his inability to grow up emotionally in this subtle fashion (31). Some children overcome their babyish ways through the normal processes of growth and their speech clears spontaneously as they mature and have more and more outside contacts and as their mothers release them for independent life in the world. Others need the help of a speech therapist to overcome such handicaps. Their progress is reported to be about twice as fast at the kindergarten level if they have special help as if they do not, and some might not clear up at all without such help (29). One recent study, however, compared a group of children who had speech correction work with another matched group, who not only had the same speech lessons, but whose mothers also had psychotherapy. The progress in articulation was much more marked for the children whose mothers were helped to release them emotionally and to enjoy them at successive levels of maturation (32).

Numerous studies of stutterers reveal

that their relationships with their mothers or other adults who are emotionally important to them are usually tense and disturbed (11, 14, 18, 23, 26). Such children often harbor deep resentment and suppressed hostility toward over-possessive and domineering mothers from whom they are unable to break away emotionally even at maturity. All normal children go through a period in their speech development when they do considerable repeating of words and syllables (7). This is due to the fact that their ideas are coming faster than they can say them. Normally this phase is outgrown in a family setting where there is a relaxed matter-of-fact attitude. However, the parents of stutterers are tense, worrisome perfectionists who are often overconcerned about speech because of a speech problem in the family background (18, 19). They often give the child undue attention during this period when he repeats many words. The child may then discover that he can gain attention which he does not get in other ways by this kind of speech. Or, he may sense the fear of the parents that he will stutter and, as fears are contagious, he too develops a fear which manifests itself in stuttering. Such things are especially likely to become problems if the child has to undergo an operation, suffers from a serious illness, or if a new baby arrives when he is in a critical stage of language development. Thus, it appears that the parents usually make the diagnosis in cases of stuttering, and it is they who place the label "stutterer" on a child. It is also evident that the significant events in the child's emotional life have an important influence on whether or not he will become a speech problem or whether he will come to school with normal speech habits on which to build academic success.

Home Atmosphere

Further indications of qualitative differences in the home atmosphere of children who are advanced or retarded in language development comes from a study by Milner (25). This investigator found that children who were in the lowest third of their class in first-grade language scores did not have breakfast with their parents. No adult talked to them before school in two-way conversations. Some of them heard only orders or instructions, but there was no active participation in conversation by these children either before school, at supper or during the usual household routines when most children have opportunity for considerable give-and-take conversation and linguistic stimulation in the family circle. It was also revealed that these same children do not receive any outward show of affection from significant adults in their homes, and there seemed to be little evidence of genuine acceptance by their parents. In contrast, the children whose language scores were in the upper third of their class did have breakfast with their families and engaged in considerable two-way conversation before school and at supper, and they were recipients of considerable outward show of affection in the family circle. When the disciplinary methods used in the homes of these two groups were studied, it appeared that those who were retarded in language were liberally treated to direct physical punishment by either or both parents; whereas those high in language scores were subjected to controlling, preventing and prohibitory disciplinary techniques, but not to corporal punishment. It is quite probable that these are some of the factors that operate more often in the lower socio-economic levels to retard language development of children in these groups and hence may account in large part for the often reported differences in language development of various socio-economic classes.

Bilingualism

Children who come from homes where a foreign language is spoken present a prob-

lem familiar to most experienced teachers (2). All of these children have the same kinds of problems of leaving home and adjusting to the school situation that English-speaking children have, but in addition, they are confronted with having to learn an entirely new system of communication with which they have had little or no experience. Inability to communicate makes even the well-adjusted adult feel insecure when he travels in a foreign country. How much more insecure must the little child feel when he enters a classroom where a strange language is spoken, and where perhaps the whole culture which represents everything he has learned to love in the home is disregarded, laughed at, or at least suppressed! It is important that teachers and classmates show interest in and respect for the bilingual child's other system of communication which is merely different from, and not necessarily inferior to, the prevailing system in the school and in the community. In fact, it is sheer happenstance that his native tongue is not theirs, and they too, may some day need to speak and use his language; and may spend many long hours laboriously acquiring even the degree of facility he already possesses in it. One's language habits have deep emotional roots, and in individual cases, the ease with which one overcomes a foreign accent, or the tenaciousness with which he retains it, may be an unconscious symbolic reaction to persons and events in early childhood with which such speech patterns have become associated (6, 12).

Interdependence of Home and School Atmospheres

As the children begin to feel secure in the classroom situation they become freer and more spontaneous, and in a permissive classroom atmosphere they make marked progress in listening and speaking skills. The teacher uses simple books to tell and read stories and develops interest in books by encouraging children to turn pages and to look at pictures. In every way she tries to create a desire to read.

Such preliminary training for reading readiness may not be necessary, however, for children whose homes have provided them with good oral example, with a variety of books and who have had stories read to them at home. Children unconsciously absorb the attitudes of adults towards books. The child who comes from a home where two newspapers a day, several magazines a week and several books a month are read by the parents may see reading as a source of enjoyment and recreation for those about him. He will be curious about what can possibly hold the interest of his parents so long. As all children want to be grown-up, and do imitate adult behavior in much of their activity, the child from the highly literate home often pretends to read, wants to read, asks to be taught the meaning of symbols on paper and tries to make meaningful marks as he colors and paints. This kind of home atmosphere and example is likely to lay the foundation for academic progress, and it is children from such homes who practically teach themselves to read. The home has created a need and a desire to acquire such skills and has made them seem important to the child.

On the other hand, children who come from homes where little reading is done, where the parents spend their leisure hours on the golf course or tennis courts, at the bridge table or at the work bench, at the bowling alley, or listening to the radio and watching television, are not likely to value reading so highly. Books and reading seem unnecessary and unimportant and do not attract or hold their interest. Children from homes where parents are illiterate may also sense their parents' feeling of distaste for reading and their frustration at their own inability to read well, and their feeling of inadequacy when

confronted with a reading situation. It is for children from homes such as these that reading readiness programs are essential, and for whom the learning of the complicated skills of reading and writing need to be deferred. Children whose families communicate with excessive use of gesture language, who use elliptical expressions amounting to a kind of oral short-hand cannot anticipate how a sentence should be completed, and hence cannot help themselves much in guessing a new word from context. Such children need much preliminary practice in oral English, speaking and listening before they are ready to read.

Children differ too in the range of experiences they have had. Those who have had visits to the country have probably acquired words like "tractor," "pasture," and "acre" in their vocabularies (10). Those whose families have broadened their experiences by taking them to visit the seashore, a zoo or a dairy, and who take the trouble to talk to them about these experiences, giving them the proper terms for new objects seen and new processes observed, will have much more extensive vocabularies on which to build their later language arts, than the children who come from bare, barren homes, who have never had a vacation, been to a farm, or had a ride on a train, and whose chief recreation has been playing with sticks, stones and tin cans on hard city sidewalks.

Then too, some homes have provided the child with many playmates near his own age ever since he was able to toddle about in the yard. Perhaps he has had the stimulation of play with older brothers and sisters or older neighborhood children, or perhaps he has had only one or two younger playmates available. Perhaps his sole child companion lives at some distance, has often been ill and they have played together only rarely, on carefully planned occasions. Such a child has to make tremendous social adjustments when he comes to school, and may find companionship much more interesting than books for some time. His needs on coming to school are very different from those of the child who has had two or three years of nursery school experience and who has already learned a variety of techniques of getting along with other children.

These are some of the ways in which home background from infancy on make children different as they approach the language arts curriculum in the elementary school. It is obvious that these factors produce such different kinds of children with such a variety of needs in language, with their varying patterns of skills and handicaps, that individualization of instruction is the only answer to the problem of their adequate education.

Language Disabilities

Even with optimum conditions in the school, however, there are some children who fail to learn to read and who develop serious learning disabilities even in spite of normal mentality (22, 23, 33). These often occur on a basis of emotional blocking and seem to be due to severe insecurity, anxiety or emotional trauma experienced about the same time the child was expected to learn certain language skills. Anxiety and emotional tension are opposed to learning. For effective learning to occur a child needs to be relaxed, secure, and free from anxiety. Studies of children who have failed to learn to read in spite of normal mentality, normal vision, and presumably adequate methods of instruction show them to be seriously maladjusted emotionally (22, 23, 27). Children most susceptible to emotional blocking in regard to these early learnings seem to be those who have recently experienced a change of home, the arrival of a younger brother or sister and those whose parents are either excessively overprotecting or openly hostile and rejecting. Such children may be so

preoccupied with their anxieties or with their unresolved jealousies that they cannot concentrate on the minute differences they are required to distinguish in order to learn to read. Usually their failure to learn to read is only one part of a total language disorder syndrone (33), for they are likely to have been slow in learning to talk, to have had poor articulation, and may have even stuttered for a time (22). For language difficulties do not seem to occur singly and are much more likely to be found in combination in the same individuals than would be expected by chance. Sometimes the family tensions affect several children in the family similarly so that more than one form of language disability may occur in the same family. The syndrones of siblings may be similar or one child may stutter and another may have difficulty with reading.

Children having language learning disabilities do not all have the same type of personality (23). Those whose parents are over-protecting are likely to stutter especially if they are in the upper intellectual levels. If their intelligence is average or a little below, reading is likely to be their stumbling-block and they usually have a shy, submissive, immature personality pattern. On the other hand, if the anxieties seem to be associated with parental rejection, hostility, and neglect, the child's personality is likely to be that of the aggressive bully or the pre-delinquent whose low school marks are often attributed to his misbehavior.

Such forms of retardation are often allowed to become cumulative and are not called to the attention of a clinic or a remedial teacher until after several years of failure have built up unfortunate attitudes towards school, books, and reading, which act as secondary causes and which are sometimes given primary consideration in treatment. Often complaints are sent home and these already rejecting or oversolicitous parents are asked to help the children with their reading. This technique usually only makes matters worse. The rejecting and hostile parent only becomes more so, for he is now ashamed of his son and takes it out on him in punitive and restrictive disciplinary measures, which only increase the child's basic anxieties and his feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness. The overprotective parent, on the other hand, may sit down with the child and give him excessive attention for school work. This, the child may enjoy, and he may find such attention more pleasurable than school success. With his regressive patterns of behavior he may even dread the loss of the time the parent gives him and he may find it more emotionally satisfying to remain academically dependent on the parent.

Not all research studies are in harmony on this interpretation of language disabilities. Some writers seem confused because children having reading and speech disabilities do not present the same personality syndrone. Certain of the large-scale studies have used superficial group techniques which have been inadequate to reveal the dynamics involved in individual cases.

It should not be construed from the position expressed here, however, that emotional insecurity always manifests itself in a language disorder. Indeed, the clinical literature is replete with evidence that insecurity often shows itself in a variety of other problems. It is even possible for a bright, emotionally insecure child to read exceptionally well and to use his reading as a means of securing adult attention or to escape into a fantasy world. However, when reading and speech cases are studied deeply enough to reveal the underlying dynamics, the point of view expressed above is invariably confirmed. It is also evident that in any group of children who are manifesting severe be-

havior disorders the number of severe reading and speech problems is much higher than would be found in a sample of normal school children.

Remedial Work

The teacher who remains cold and impersonal and relies chiefly on her choice of materials and her special techniques is rarely successful. Her successes are likely to be limited to those cases whose anxieties and fears which interfered with their original learning have cleared up in the meantime due to the child's own growth and maturation, or due to improved attitudes in the home situation. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence in the literature to indicate that the teacher is most successful in remedial work who is herself a well adjusted, warm, outgoing personality, who shows genuine interest in the child and enables him to find some degree of security in the tutoring situation which he has never found before. Redmount (27) has found for example that there is a definite relationship between the adequacy of the tutor's personality adjustment and the degree of improvement in the child.

The overprotective parents with shy submissive children having language difficulties are more likely to seek help with the problem and to be cooperative with a school or clinical remedial program. These are the types of cases which seem to respond best to treatment. However, they often need a fairly long period of therapy before they are ready to undertake real work in reading or speech. When personality changes are brought about and the child is relieved of his anxieties and tensions, much progress in speech and reading seems to occur rather spontaneously. It is almost as if certain latent learnings to which the child has been exposed during his period of anxiety now emerge and become functionally effective.

The rejecting parents of aggressive children are, however, unlikely to seek help from a clinic or remedial program and are unlikely to cooperate with the program if they are induced to make an initial contact. Such children are usually referred by the school, by a social agency or by the court and are rarely seen in clinics charging high fees, for no one is sufficiently interested in their welfare to pay for their tutoring. Usually they do not get help until a considerably later age and after a more prolonged period of failure. It is much more difficult to accomplish real results with cases of this type, for often they have been hurt too deeply and too early for their personalities to respond favorably. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find an adequate substitute for parental affection which should be every child's birth-right. Perhaps by earlier identification and with improved techniques based on a real appreciation of the emotional basis of their problems we will be able to help more of them than we have in the past. Some of them are motivated to learn in adolescence as they begin to feel their growing independence, but this usually happens only when they have found a parent substitute in a teacher, relative, pastor, recreation leader, or supervisor in a correctional school who has had a wholesome influence and enabled them to find some measure of security in this troubled world.

From the foregoing it becomes abundantly clear that the mother is the first language teacher and that the quality of the parent-child relationship does much to lay the groundwork for success in the language arts. It is also clear that anything that can be done to ease the transition from home to school, to make the child feel secure in the school situation, to help rejecting parents to be more accepting of their children, and to help oversolicitous parents to release their children for independent growth will free children from

their emotional tensions and anxieties so that they may take advantage of the best opportunities for learning in the modern language arts program.

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School Influences

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Children have traveled a long way on the road of language learning when they reach the age for elementary school. All of them, unless they have serious sensory defects or serious lack of capacity for learning, can understand and can speak their mother language well enough to make their needs and wishes known and to communicate with others on matters that interest them. Most of them use all kinds of sentences that adults use and a wide vocabulary of words and meanings. The quality of language and the extent of vocabulary which each child brings to school are products of his environment and the experiences it has afforded him. Whether a child is bright or dull, his language will be that of his home and neighborhood.

The language a child has learned from parents and others he loves and respects, and that serves his communication needs in his home life, is intimately interwoven with his sense of security. If the language used by the teacher and her methods of communicating at school are sufficiently similar to those of the home he tends to find little difficulty in accepting her and broadening his feeling of security so that it includes the teacher and the school. If the language used and approved at school differs markedly in quality of usage or is actually a different language from the one the child has learned at home, he finds it very difficult to feel relaxed, secure, and happy in his new school environment. The tenacity with which Spanish-speaking children from Mexico and Puerto Rico, for example, cling to their mother language and use it on the playground and even in school at all points where they are not actually required to use English, illustrates the strong hold the mother language has on a child and the difficulty he finds in accepting emotionally any requirement that he change his speech. The same problem of emotional acceptance exists when children disregard the usage forms that have been practiced again and again in the classroom. Many a child who accepts without question what is being taught him in arithmetic, science, and social studies rejects either consciously or unconsciously any language correction that "does not sound right" to him or that would mark him as different from the people by whom he most needs to be accepted and approved.

The Teacher

A child's growth in language during the elementary school years is influenced by a number of factors. The teacher is, herself, an important part of the language curriculum. Her voice, vocabulary, enunciation, pronunciation, choice of words, and sentence structure all influence chil-

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dren in a variety of ways. How much and in what ways children are influenced by her speech and language depends on several factors. One of these is the feeling of confidence and security a child develops as a result of a healthy relationship with his teacher. Another is the degree of basic similarity between home language and school language and the respect shown by each for the other. Still another factor is the use to which language is put, the emotional tone it carries, and the feelings it engenders in the child. Children in the early grades frequently copy the teacher quite unconsciously, while children of the middle grades are more strongly affected by the standards of their peers than those set by the teacher.

Language is only one of the ways teachers communicate with children. Their attitudes, ideals, standards, values, reactions of all sorts, are also sensed by children even though they are never expressed in words. Children react to the personality of the teacher and the climate for learning that she develops in the classroom just as they react to light, heat, and air.

Consciously or unconsciously, teachers use language to bring about many types of reaction in children. They may use language to stimulate thinking or they may use it to discourage or cut off thinking. The teacher's use of language may help children to reason independently or may encourage them to accept dogmatic statements without question or protest. She may build up each child's self-respect and sense of the worth of his own thinking, or she may tear him down and make him feel inadequate or unworthy through criticism, impatience or intolerance. It takes real skill and a great deal of insight and knowledge of the psychology of human behavior to devalue an idea or a bit of unacceptable behavior without devaluing the person whose ideas or behavior are unsatisfactory. Teachers teach children to express their thoughts or to conceal them, to be sincere and out-going or to be cautious and hypercritical.

The way the teacher communicates with children does much to influence their attitudes toward each other. These do not develop from the teacher's words alone, but from her own attitudes of acceptance or rejection, kindliness or intolerance. It is clearly evident to children where each stands in the eyes of the teacher—whether he is enjoyed or disliked, approved or disapproved, worthy or unworthy. The attitudes of the teacher in turn influence the attitudes of the children toward one another.

The values the teacher holds shine forth in all that she does. The spiritual values, the ethical, economic, social, and political values that the teacher believes in all come to the surface in one way or another in the course of classroom living. Therefore children need as their teacher an emotionally mature person who looks at life in a straightforward and wholesome manner and who can impart these attitudes to them.

Every teacher uses language to control behavior, but the effectiveness of language control varies with a number of factors. Olson (20) calls attention to the fact that in the nursery school approximately ninety per cent of the controls are through language, but that as children grow older, less effort is spent on language designed to produce acceptable social behavior. An intensive study of language controls used by teachers was conducted by Johnson (14). It yields a number of generalizations on language influences, among which were the following: suggestions and encouraging remarks impelled children to accept or to continue simple tasks while children given no guidance or approval frequently abandoned the tasks; specific requests were more effective than general ones; pleasant requests were more effec-

tive than scolding in encouraging children to attempt tasks or in diverting them from activities which interested them; hopeful remarks were more valuable than depriving ones; encouragement caused a child to work promptly, whereas verbal hurrying tended to delay rather than expedite; and simple requests were more effective than threats.

Skill in the use of verbal controls is, therefore, closely related to general teaching skill (19). Sheer quantity of language has been found to be unimportant in guidance, but quality, as expressed in the percentage of positive and constructive language is very important. Language, Olson states, is circular in character. Integrative language on the part of the teacher produces integrative behavior on the part of the child, while ineffective, or divisive language may produce resistance or aggression (19, p. 307). In the former situation the child's mental and emotional states are improved, or at least kept in equilibrium, while in the latter situation they deteriorate progressively.

The 12,000 children who wrote compositions in connection with a Quiz Kids program on the topic, "The Teacher Who Has Helped Me Most," listed a great many points which brought out the significance of the mental hygiene approach in the classroom (31). It was the outstanding feature of their letters. In order of frequency the qualities emphasied were: cooperativeness; democratic attitudes; kindliness and consideration for the individual; patience; wide interests; pleasing manner and appearance; fairness; sense of humor; good disposition and consistent behavior; interest in pupils' problems; flexibility; use of recognition and praise; and unusual proficiency in teaching a particular subject. Witty, who was responsible for the project, concludes, "The boys and girls appear to be grateful to the school in proportion to the degree that it offers security, individual success, shared experiences, and opportunities for personal and social adjustments. And these are precisely the factors which promote good learning" (31, p. 386). Jersild and Holmes (13), in an earlier study, analyzed characteristics mentioned by children as those they liked best and liked least in teachers. Many of the same qualities appear as in the study by Witty. Children like teachers who plan interesting school projects and who explain well. With the children, the teacher's success or failure appears to lie largely in her personal qualities and social relationships.

The Peer Group

Young children appear to be influenced by the teacher's own language far more than are older children. The reasons for this are not hard to find. Five and six-year-olds usually like their teacher very much and seven-year-olds feel particularly close to her (10). They want to please her and often call attention to their efforts in order to gain her approval. They also imitate quite unconsciously as their ears become attuned to the teacher's speech. When they tell a story or repeat a poem they have heard the teacher read they tend to use her manner, speech patterns, rhythm, dramatic interpretation, or whatever to them is a part of that selection.

Through play with other children of their own age boys and girls learn to engage in more and more true verbal interaction. Piaget (21), in his studies of French-speaking children in Geneva, found little real conversational interaction before the age of seven and one-half years, whereas teachers in both England and the United States find a good deal of such interaction at five and six years of age (27, 29).

Opportunities to share, plan, report the progress of their work, and to evaluate their activities in oral periods under the teacher's guidance help children to learn to express themselves with increasing ease

and clarity. Such experiences also enable them to listen and to react to the contributions of others, and to allow others their share of time to talk. These abilities grow more rapidly in the guided group situations provided at school than in unsupervised neighborhood play or at home with people of varying ages and relationships (9, 27). From the ego-centered speech of the young child to a mature meeting of minds is a long process of growth and requires practice and guidance all along the way.

Beginning at eight years of age and becoming very strong at nine and ten is interest in breaking away from adult domination and in developing closer ties with the peer group. Until recently there have been relatively few studies of nine to thirteen-year-olds. Redl (22) gave attention to them in 1944 and Blair and Burton (6) have summarized what is known about them more recently. All studies of children of these ages indicate the interest in gang and group life which appears an outstanding characteristic of this period.

Zachry and Lightv (25) consider this group life before puberty an important step in the growth of independence for the individual. It appears to serve as a haven from parental authority and an opportunity for social contacts that make fewer demands than do adult ones. It is clear that there is extravagant disregard for adult standards in such matters as manners and grooming. The development of secret signs and secret language at this period helps to prevent adults from following and checking on gang activities.

Along with all of this effort to break away from adult controls and standards goes disregard for the kinds of speech adults consider important. Teachers find that ability to fill in correctly all blanks in work-book exercises in language does not mean that a child will apply what he is learning when he is away from the immediate presence of the teacher. Many children find themselves in very serious conflict between their loyalty to the teacher and her standards and the accepted behavior of the group. Some of them actually reject the teacher's corrections because they cannot afford to jeopardize their place in the group through failure to fit into the group pattern. Others may try to live up to both standards, but they rarely succeed in standing well with both the adults and the peer group.

Interest in new, colorful, vigorous vocabulary is keen during this period. Slang is acquired eagerly by some children and many of them try at least a little completely unauthorized language. Strang (26) suggests that some of this interest in language might possibly be directed into interest in a foreign language if it were taught so that the learners could enjoy and utilize it in daily contacts.

The preadolescent period is one of tremendous intellectual curiosity and wide and vital interests. With this goes rapid growth in vocabulary if these varied interests are encouraged and fed.

The School Environment and Atmosphere

A curious pattern of classroom arrangement developed in the schools of the United States during the latter half of the last century. The individual desks screwed down in evenly spaced rows with the teacher's desk in the center front of the room reflected a basically undemocratic philosophy. Such a seating arrangement made each child as completely an island of isolation as was possible with the available space. In such classrooms communication among children was usually forbidden and illegal. One of the greatest crimes a child could commit was to whisper to another child to ask or to give help. To communicate in writing through passing a note surreptitiously often brought dire consequences if detected. The place-

ment of the teacher's desk expresses the concept of her role. In such a setting she can see and dominate at all times without moving from her station.

In schools in which teachers seek to apply what is known about child development there is movable furniture and work centers are provided that can be arranged and rearranged to fit all kinds of classroom activities and needs. There are centers of interest to stimulate thinking and initiative so that children do not need to wait for the teacher's next command in order to use their time purposefully. Arrangement of furniture lends itself to both individual and group work. Grouping for various types of activity provides encouragement of thoughtful and helpful interaction so that children learn to communicate with their peers and work together as well as independently. Classrooms should not be factories for pouring knowledge and skills into children as into rows of empty cups. Classrooms should be workshops and studios where children seek creatively and cooperatively for experience and learning (27).

As was shown in the previous article in this series, children have had enormous practice with spoken language before they come to school. A child of four is said to be verbally inactive no more than nineteen minutes of his waking day, with four minutes his longest period of silence. He may have a verbal output of ten to twelve thousand words a day (27). As a result of all this language activity, he enters school with a large vocabulary of words and meanings. A study by Mary K. Smith (25) estimates that six-year-olds entering first grade have vocabularies of about 24,000 words. Further language growth is often inhibited rather than advanced by practices within the school. If there is little opportunity to use oral language to meet natural classroom needs such as sharing, planning, discussing, reporting, and evaluating the interests and work of the group, there will be little growth in skill in using oral language. If children are tied too closely to a program of skill development in reading and writing, they are forcibly placed on a language-learning plateau, since the words they deal with in this early period are all known words which they have long been using effectively in oral situations (19, 27).

In order for children to progress in language development, there must be many types of first-hand and vicarious experience at every grade level. Social studies and science experiences provide many opportunities for growth in vocabulary and sentence structure, as well as in clarity and ease of expression. Classroom equipment, materials, activities, and organization need to be planned with these developmental needs in mind.

In an effort to develop techniques for studying the psychological relationships in classroom, a detailed study was made of the entire waking day of a seven year old boy (34). In the social climate of his classroom he appeared less intense, less energetic, less efficient and creative or constructive, though somewhat more cooperative in activities than he was outside of school. The classroom habitat offered fewer recognized and promising things to do and his behavior in it was generally less satisfying. A study of the relationship of school atmosphere to children's reactions in frustrating situations was also revealing. In the traditional school studied children's reactions were over-conforming while in the "progressive" school they were under-conforming (18). The investigators concluded that their data support previous studies which indicate that more permissive environments in which fewer frustrations occur tend to provide conditions under which the individual is most likely to utilize his own initiative in developing his capacities.

Books and Reading

In addition to the influences upon chil-

dren's language that grow out of the school situation and the people who are a part of it, there are also the deliberately planned influences for which the school assumes responsibility. One of the special tasks of the school has always been the introduction of children into the understanding and use of written language symbols.

The school's influence on children through books, reading, and literature has four major facets: the provision of adequate quantity and variety of books and materials together with plenty of time to use them; help with developing skill in reading; guidance in the selection and use of reading materials; and any therapy which may be needed.

Modern schools center their first efforts on building interest in stories, poetry, and books and helping children to enjoy them (2). Every good kindergarten and first grade gives important space to a library table, book corner, or some shelves from which children may select books. It also provides a comfortable spot where children may browse through books, look at pictures, and construct their own content or stories from the pictures or reconstruct the stories they have heard the teacher tell or read. Classroom and school libraries as well as the public library provide a wide variety of material for older children who can read, as well as guidance in the selection of material that is suitable in difficulty and content. King (15) has called attention to the influence of the classroom and its equipment on reading progress. Since Americans give more time to magazine reading than to any other form, the classroom should be well equipped with magazines as well as with many types of books other than textbooks. The emotional and intellectual environment which the teacher creates is of the greatest importance in stimulating progress in reading development.

Guidance in learning to read and in developing essential reading skills has been written about so extensively that it need not be given space here (5, 23, 30). There are as many methods of teaching reading as there are variations in children's needs. The point of greatest importance is that the teacher adapt both methods and materials to the social and emotional as well as to the intellectual needs of each child.

Children's interests in reading have been studied by a number of investigators, both librarians and teachers (32, 33). Lazar (16) found no great difference between the reading matter selected by dull children as compared with children who were mentally average or superior. The dull children read less, however, and tended to turn somewhat more to mystery and adventure stories than did children of higher ability. Such interests are fed by the available profusion of comics, which may account in part for the heavy reading of comics by these children (1). Studies of favorite books at various age and grade levels have been summarized by Witty and Russell in their recent books (30, 23). Suggestions for guiding children's reading appear in these books and in a number of others (5, 23, 30).

The therapeutic value of reading is currently receiving a good deal of attention. Russell (24) has summarized what is known and believed about the use of reading to relieve or to heal emotional problems. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers are turning attention to it as well as educators. Reading proves valuable therapy for some children and for some types of problems. A teacher who has read children's books with this in mind can put material before a child so that he may relieve some of his anxiety, fear, tension, and frustration through identification with book characters and events, and he may thus gain confidence and a sense of power to face and solve his own problems (3) without having to bring them out into the open. The needs of delinquent boys

and deprived boys who were not delinquent show at a number of points in the study of juvenile delinquency by the Gluecks (11). The right books at the right time might conceivably help such boys to satisfy some of their restless urges to be doing things that seem important to them. Books might give them some perspective on their home problems as well. Certainly, the friendly interest and personal concern of a teacher who puts forth real effort to find books such boys like and who takes time to talk the books over with them might save some of them from delinquency.

Interrelationships of Language Arts

Learning to write, to spell, and to put language down on paper in conventional form occupy a considerable portion of the time of the elementary school years. While it is undoubtedly true that any skill as intricate and exacting as these require a great deal of practice for mastery, consensus is growing that functional learning is more economical and has greater value than meaningless practice on isolated skills. One cannot write writing nor read reading, therefore one must write and read something; there must be content of some kind if skills are to be acquired in form for use. Consequently, teachers are emphasizing increasingly the interrelationships between the content of social studies, science, and literature and the skills which are means to ends in dealing with that content.

Artley (4) has summarized the studies dealing with the interrelationships which exist among the language arts themselves. He found that correlations between reading and other language abilities are substantial even though the influence of intelligence is removed (28). As was shown in the second article in this series, a positive relationship exists between speech difficulties and deficiencies in reading ability. Artley also calls attention to an unpublished study by Hughes (12) which indicates that achievement in spelling bears a positive relationship to a wide range of other skills. In descending order, these are: reading, language usage, capitalization, punctuation, sentence sense, and paragraph organization. Cook (7) indicates the relationship of grammar and usage to spelling. Other studies also show that reading comprehension is positively related to hearing comprehension and hearing comprehension is positively related to vocabulary understanding and language use. Thus, it appears that no part of the constellation of language skills can be completely divorced from all others either in learning or in use.

The value of systematic practice on language skills versus incidental practice has long been considered and discussed. Dawson (8) has drawn together some of the most important pronouncements regarding this controversy. She found evidence that leaders were insisting as early as 1929 that regimented group instruction is inferior to individual instruction. Over 1600 children in Grades 3 through 7 turned in language papers, an analysis of which proved that the children who had known the language facts before the practice lesson turned in correct papers whereas those who had been making mistakes continued to do so. Her conclusion and that of other studies, she cites, is that both direct and indirect attack must be made on language problems in relationship to use. This effort must be carried on through enterprises which have real social value for children and attention must be given to individual needs in all cases.

The school's influence on the language growth of children is of great concern to all who are interested in education. Part of that influence results from carefully planned language experiences and from guided practice in areas where need is evident. Part of the influence is related

to the human relationships that obtain in the classroom and the climate for learning which exists there. The influence which the school exerts on the language behavior of each of its pupils is only one of many influences. Some of these strengthen the school's efforts, some undermine or nullify them. The language behavior of each individual child is far too complex in its manifestation for any single institution to be held entirely responsible for it.

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Community Influences

MURIEL CROSBY[1]

Introduction

Language as a vehicle for communication, for thinking, and for the control of behavior, has its roots deeply buried in the life of the community of which the child is a part. The present emphasis upon the language arts as processes in the child's development needs to be balanced with an emphasis upon the content within which the processes operate, and it is within the area of content especially, that the community influences language growth. Each of the language arts, listening, speaking, reading, writing, carries content, for as Swenson (14) states: "The subject matter or content transmitted through the language processes affords the key to integration of learning in the language arts field with learning in all other areas."

Growth in language depends upon the quality of meaning derived by the child through each language experience. There is a direct relationship between the quality of meaning derived and the environment in which the child lives and gains experience. This environment with all of its institutions and individuals, the home, the school, the neighbors, the church, the policeman on the corner; this environment with all of its physical characteristics, the pond for swimming, the swift-running river, the Indian trails now become broad highways, the snow which imprisons with its white and terrible beauty—all of these things make the community. And they become a part of children in unique ways because each one is a different individual.

Many years ago, Walt Whitman in "Leaves of Grass" described the interaction between the child and his community with the words of a poet. It is difficult to find anywhere a more potent picture of the impact of community life on the language of the growing child (17).

"There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years of stretching cycles of years.

* * *

The early lilacs became part of this child
And grass and white and red morning-glories, and white and red clover, and the song of the phoebe-bird.

* * *

And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below there, and the beautiful curious liquid,
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads, all became part of him.

* * *

And the schoolmistress that pass'd on her way to the school,
And the friendly boys that pass'd, and the quarrelsome boys,

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His own parents, he that father'd him and she that had conceiv'd him in her womb and birth'd him,
They give this child more of themselves than that,
They gave him afterward every day, they became part of him.

• • •

The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture, the yearning and swelling heart,
Affection that will not be gainsay'd
The sense of what is real, the thought if after all it should prove unreal,
The doubts of daytime and the doubts of nighttime,
The curious whether and how, whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes and specks?

• • •

These became part of that child who went forth every day,
And who now goes, and will always go forth every day."

Edward Wagenknecht has rendered a similar service in his delightful collection of fragments of autobiography (15) which reflect the ways people and places in a community shape the child into the adult he is to become. In this material there are many excellent illustrations of how, through community life, the content of language is developed.

Research studies of the effect of community influences on language growth are few, particularly for the nine to thirteen-year-olds. Available studies show, however, that a common characteristic of this age group is the desire for gangs, clubs, and other groups, free, or partially free, of adult domination. This desire for freedom from adult control is sometimes manifested in the use of language, in carrying on gang or club activities, which may be offensive to adults or which may violate home and community standards, secret codes and symbols unintelligible to adults, and other language activities. Zachry and Lighty (19) cite the values of group life activities for children of elementary age in terms of establishing independence from parental control. Studies by Redl (9) and by Blair and Burton (1) summarize data descriptive of this age group.

The pre-adolescent groups' language is usually characterized by a love of slang which is frequently indigenous to the local community. This may well be a continuation of the interest in language manifested by the very young child who is experiencing his initial use of language and may provide a clue, as Strang suggests (12), for the introduction of the learning of foreign languages in the elementary schools.

Again, the socio-economic status of a community plays an important part in the language growth of children. The availability of cultural resources, the interest of parents and other adults in cultural and recreational pursuits, the kinds of newspapers a community supports, the amount and quality of reading stimulated by the home, the school, and the local libraries, all play a part in language growth. Strickland (13) cites a study of vocabulary of several thousand children in Birmingham, England, which showed that at ten years of age, children of a high socio-economic group scored on an average fifty percent higher than children from poorer communities. The difference between the two groups diminished with increase in age until at fourteen, there was little difference in vocabulary scores.

While there is comparatively little available in the field of research on community influences on language growth, a number of potentially significant contributions to this problem are found in current experiments and practices which are at the present time unpublished. A description of some of the more promising attempts to use the community for stimulating language growth seems appropriate. Naturally, many of these experiments are school directed, for the good, modern elementary

school uses the community as a laboratory for learning.

The Community as a School Laboratory for Language Growth

The teacher who would develop insight into the potentiality for stimulating children's language growth through community experience must become the poet Elizabeth Browning describes when she says,

"The poet has the child's sight in his breast
And sees all new. What oftenest he has viewed
He views with the first glory."

Here is the teacher become the poet Mrs. Browning describes, when she observes with a three-year-old the clouds of smoke pouring from the chimneys of New York's roof-tops and recognizes as language growth the child's comment later as she sits alone, "I'm being quiet as smoke"; and the five-year-old who makes a brilliant picture of the freight train he has recently seen and describes it with language equally brilliant and colorful, "Here's a big freight train, a clattering, battering train that bumps along, carrying all the world's airplanes over these tracks." This is language growth in young children which could develop only through rich and vital experience in community living (7).

There is the teacher of six-year olds who sees the opportunity for community experience as content in developing language processes through social living. She takes her group on a trip to a little island just off the northern tip of the Bronx and later records this experience.

A Trip to City Island

"One day during discussion it was decided that we might make a map of the Bronx. We had made so many trips that we could almost do the entire Bronx outline but we did lack knowledge of the eastern boundary. However, any place you go to the east would be practically the same as the eastern boundary, water. We thought a trip to City Island would be just the thing to help us.

"The procedure, as usual, was to visit the place first, without the children, and more or less smooth the way. So I went to City Island one afternoon. The island is a wonderful place for getting a view of the east coast of the Bronx. It is a twenty minute trip by school bus.

"The chief industry of the island is building boats, from row boats to million dollar yachts. During the war they built landing craft and other small boats. I talked to Mr. P. . . . at Bilden Point and then went to see Mr. G. . . ., manager of Minniford Yacht Builders. I had to have permission from Mr. S. . . ., owner of this "yard" in order to take the children on the pier; he gave me permission.

"We then waited for nice weather. The Friday we expected to go it rained, but Monday was beautiful. We were able to get the bus, so we all got ready. The children were excited because their interests in boats had increased and so had their interest in making the map. Off we went to see, hear, smell, and maybe feel!

"The bus took us down to Broadway, through Van Cortlandt Park to Gun Hill Rd. and on to Pelham, from Pelham across a small bridge to City Island.

"Mr. P. . . . met us at Bilden Point. The children liked him right away. He had brought shells for them and had a big one which he said he had had for years. He told us that Bilden Point is the southernmost point of City Island from which you get a wonderful view of the coast. Here, too, lobsters which supply the New York market, are kept. They are flown from Maine, dropped at Rye Lake, and brought on to Bilden Point by boat. Here at the point they are kept in pots of salt water until used. These pots are located in the Bay.

"At Bilden Point there is a pilot station, too. Here boats whose captains are not qualified to take them through the waters to Hell Gate Bridge pick up a pilot who is qualified.

"Jonathon was excited about the "pots" for the lobsters and wanted to see them. Mr. P. . . . explained that these were sunken tanks and made so lobsters couldn't get out but salt water could get in. He made a crude sketch for Jonathon which was carefully guarded all the way home.

"Bert, who had been running back and forth exploring, suddenly wanted to know what that high pile of stones was with the shiny thing on top. It was Stepping Stones Lighthouse. We all sat down on the pier while Mr. P. . . . told us about the Indian legend and how this lighthouse got its name. The gist of the story was history for six-year olds–that the Indians thought Giants, going from one island to the other, used these stones to step on when crossing the bay to Long Island from City Island. Bert, Jonathon, Bill and Stephanie were doing giant steps all over the place.

"We went down to Minneford Yacht Builders' Pier and were met by Mr. G. . . . We all called him Mike right from the start. There were boats, and boats and more boats, some in the water, some out of water and some just being built. Mike began to tell us about the cradle. "I thought water rocked boats," said Bill. Then Mike explained that this cradle is pulled up onto the rock and the boat is in "dry dock."

"We started out along the pier. Here Norman reached down to feel the pipes as he called them. Mike told him about these "pipes." They were pipe lines for electricity to charge the batteries, to keep lights and electric stoves and heaters operating in the boats. There were gasoline pipes for the propeller engines and fresh water pipes for engines, drinking, and washing water.

"There were tracks running out on this pier and the children asked Mike about these, wondering if an engine ran out there. He said it was a truck which was run along the pier in order to carry repair equipment out and bring back the engine to the work shop after it had been lifted from the boat by a derrick.

"We went out to the end of the pier and from there to a large pontoon or float, by way of a gang plank. First the children just looked, then they must have been smelling too (it didn't smell too good). Bert said, "It stinks." This must have been a signal for questions for they came quick and fast. One of them was, "What were the bunches of logs, all tied together, doing standing up in water. Two of the boys knew they were pilings.

"One or two of the timid children didn't care for the swaying of the pontoon. We sat and listened to Capt. B. . . ., who had come from France not long before, tell us about masts, shrouds, and rigging, which was somewhat over our heads.

"As we stood on the pontoon, looking over the water we could see Hart's Island on which is the Naval Prison. After visiting one of the boats to try out the bunks, get a drink at the little sink, see the lounge, and look at the chart which was placed under the glass right at the wheel, we turned back.

"The boys loved the shiny wood as they ran their hands along rails. They wanted to run their hands along the masts which were lying on one side of the pier. They were so smooth. Stephanie said they were like yellow looking glass. Then Mike took us over to the lumber piles which reminded the boys of our block shelves in school, only there was space between these. Mike said the boards needed air to circulate so that they would become "seasoned" or dried.

"We learned that cedar, oak, and mahogany and teak wood were used for boats and that the hard teak wood which came from the East Indies was the best.

"We all were invited to the workmen's "locker" room and then were ready to go home.

"This experience took hold at once. The Bay and Sound were laid out and boats put on it. A few days after the trip the work bench became a busy place. Boats were in the making, all kinds. Lighthouses appeared in the paintings. Stories of their own developed. And I do think the children got a real feeling about the eastern boundary of the Bronx (3)."

This glowing account of a rich and rewarding experience in the community reveals the equally rich and rewarding experience in language, in the discussions, the planning, the conversations, the new and exciting concepts and vocabulary, and finally in the creative story writing that resulted.

An equally exciting account of the community as a laboratory for language experience is the following excerpt from a student teacher's report of her work with seven-year-olds (11). In describing one phase of an exploratory study of their city, the children planned a river drive to see the Hudson and East Rivers. The teacher records the following account.

"Upon our return, the children wanted to start a story right way; it still hasn't been finished, but is being added to daily, line by line. Here is the "river ride" to date:

The River Ride

We did not have a boat—we had cars,
Two cars crammed with children.
From the school to the East River,
The dirty, gray, oily East River.
Which was pushing and fighting with a boat.
We saw rocks in the river
And Welfare Island.
Over it the Queensboro Bridge
With all its girders
There were barges
Being loaded from shoots
The sacks shot down! Whizz!
A helicopter was coming down
We could see its pontoons.
The Williamsburg Bridge seemed ugly.
Then we saw the busy Manhattan.
Bridges—cars coming and going,
Some from the Holland Tunnel.
The East River was here—
It was more awake here—
Tugs, fire boats, police boats,
More barges, rows of coast guard speed boats,
Trains and ferries.

"Through careful guidance the children were not overwhelmed by the number of things they had seen. By taking the story piece by piece the children had the opportunity to take in the interesting points along the way.

"The sand table had been put into use to portray the harbor. Boats have been made from clay in the classroom, and in shop from wood under the guidance of a competent teacher. Houses have also been made with stores and apartment buildings; these will be added to the sandbox scene as it really takes shape.

"Daily, some part of the trip creeps into the morning discussion; the children are thrilled with their trip, and soon will be ready to share a few of the experiences with the Lower School in assembly."

Developing social responsibility and acquiring the skills of letter writing may often become a happy combination as the following letter, written by the fifth grade (16) in a school in a large city, attests:

George Gray School
Wilmington, Delaware
October 3, 1952

Mr. E. . . . K. . .
Chief Engineer of the Street and Sewer Department
10th and King Streets
Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Sir:

There is a dirt island at the intersection

of 23rd and Locust Street and it has tall weeds. The island looks unattractive compared to the school grounds and Price's Run. We are wondering if you would send some men to cut the weeds.

George Gray children would appreciate it if you would cut them.

Yours truly,
Room 303

The thrill of having an immediate response to this letter stimulated these fifth graders to write a second letter requesting the improvement of the land through sodding and planting. Thus, these children were stimulated by observation of the community to use language, and in turn their use of language had an impact on the community.

Modern Media of Communication

It had been said that the great frontiers of the modern world are the fields of human relationships and technology. Certainly today's boys and girls are experiencing language through media unknown in the childhood of many teachers. The astute nine-year-olds in a school for gifted children recognized this fact when they devised "A Mass Media Test for Teachers" in which teachers were asked to classify a list of familiar characters in movies, comics, radio, and television.

Radio. Ten years ago, before television was a common medium of communication, the concern of teachers was centered on the effects of children's radio listening out of school. The writer, with a group of more than twenty primary teachers, carried on research during a period of four years on the effects of radio listening by young children of elementary school age (5). The parents of the 600 children participating made significant comments regarding the values for language growth through radio listening. The following brief sampling is of interest.

"I like my child to listen to the radio because:

It gives new ideas.
It helps to broaden his mind and makes him think.
It teaches etiquette.
It teaches proper speech.
It helps the child with word pictures.
It develops appreciation of good plays.
It provides good stories.
It gives the child something to talk about.
It substitutes for a mother too busy to tell stories.
It increases vocabulary.
It teaches the child to spell well.
It improves the child's diction.
He learns things he doesn't get at school."

From the mothers' point of view, radio listening had many advantages and few disadvantages.

During the final year of the same group study, the research was slanted toward the response of young children to radio advertising (2). Five hundred children, half from each of the primary and intermediate levels, participated. Some of the significant findings of this study are pertinent in any consideration of language growth through community influences. It was found that:

46 percent of the primary children and 87 percent of the intermediate children knew the product and brand advertised in their favorite radio program.

75 percent of the primary children and 80 percent of the intermediate children stated that they liked the product advertised, and purchased by the mothers at the urging of the children, better than the one used before.

4 percent of the older children and 25 percent of the primary children thought that everything heard on the radio was true.

Television. How the advent of television as a common means of communication in a community has affected children's radio listening is not yet known through research.

It is safe to assume, however, that wide radio listening is still common and that children's language growth is stimulated in both positive and negative ways by both media.

Witty's studies of children's interest in TV (18) reveal that in the survey made in the Evanston schools, 86 percent of the children had TV sets in their homes. While about one-third of the children stated that TV helped them with their work in subjects such as English, many claimed that TV took their time and attention from their studies. More than 40 percent indicated they read less now that they have access to TV. However, comic books were reported to be read almost as frequently as before TV.

We, Too, Have a Share in the Language Growth of Children

The Church. As in some of the other media considered in this article, little is available in research for evaluating the effect of the church on children's language growth. One of the most significant published reports of a Sunday School experience is that written by Bentz Plagemann (8). The story of a father who became a Sunday School teacher and used skillful language processes including discussion, planning, dramatizing, and script writing to help boys and girls change their attitudes and their behavior is inspiring reading and is heartily recommended.

The Library. In school and library circles a great debate centers around the effect of radio and television upon reading habits and tastes of children. As a supervisor participating in the planning of children's radio programs for in-school listening during the 1940's, it was the writer's experience to find that radio dramatization of a child's book always resulted in increased circulation of that book from the public libraries. Witty, however, as previously quoted, reported a decrease in reading as a result of TV viewing.

In a community where close working relations existed between public schools and public libraries, a study of 600 primary children's recreational pursuits (4) revealed that playing with friends and listening to the radio were the favorite out-of-school activities of the participating children in the early 1940's. Thirty-eight percent of the children used the public library regularly and eighty-three percent read for pleasure daily. The advent of newer media of communication is a real challenge to the libraries, the teacher, and the parent. In this area there are unlimited opportunities for research.

The Camp. The spread of organized camping for children as a summer experience and, in a few modern communities, as an integral part of the school curriculum, is increasing rapidly. The camp experience is invaluable as an impetus to language growth in the terms of both content and process. A good camp program provides, in addition to living in the out-of-doors, a related program of activities which embraces dramatics, storytelling, letter writing and creative writing, as well as talk and discussion (6). A challenge to every community is that of making possible a good camp experience for every girl and boy. In almost any community, there are facilities for camp-outs which would call for very little additional expense in adapting them for camp programs for children.

Conclusion

An old Chinese proverb tells us that "one of the measures of a man is his ability to live in the wide house of the world." Our children face a future we will not share. Parents, teachers, laymen, all have a responsibility for creating a community which enables children living in it, today, to build within themselves, the skills and the attitudes which will enable them to take their places in the wide house of the world, tomorrow. Certainly the commu-

nity exerts powerful influences on language growth for communication, for thinking, and for the control of behavior. Skill in each of these functions of language developed today, by children in their own communities, will shape the world they will build tomorrow.

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